

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 CPR-01 /051 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7551

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR TD US

SUBJECT: INSULTING PUBLICITY RE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH
PRIMIN WILLIAMS

1. WIDELY-READ WEEKLY "BOMB" NEWSPAPER TODAY (MAR 21)
CARRIES FACSIMILE EXCERPT FROM CHICAGO "SUN-TIMES" OF
MARCH 9 AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE: FINGERNAIL PICKER PIQUES FORD

THE PRESIDENT WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN INCENSED
WHEN VISITING PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS OF
TRINIDAD PICKED HIS FINGERNAILS DURING THEIR OVAL
OFFICE MEETING. FORD WAS DESCRIBED BY AIDES AS
"AGHAST...SHOCKED" THAT WILLIAMS WOULD CARRY ON
A CONVERSATION WITH HIM WHILE CLEANING HIS NAILS.
FORD ROSE FROM HIS ARMCHAIR AND FOUND HIMSELF
MOVING AROUND THE OVAL OFFICE, TRYING NOT TO
SHOW HIS FEELINGS. UNQUOTE.

2. "BOMB" HEADLINED ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE: "US PRESIDENT
OWES ERIC AN APOLOGY," AND CALLED FOR AN APOLOGY FOR
THE DISTASTEFUL PUBLICITY FOLLOWING THE "AUDIENCE" WITH
THE PRESIDENT. "THIS KIND OF NEWS COULD ONLY HAVE
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COME FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE USA HIMSELF AND HOLDS

NOT ONLY OUR PRIME MINISTER BUT OUR WHOLE COUNTRY UP
TO RIDICULE." OFFENDING ITEM ALLEGEDLY ALSO CARRIED
BY LONDON "DAILY MAIL."

3. COMMENT: OFFENSIVENESS OF SUN-TIMES ALLEGATION
ATTRIBUTED TO THE PRESIDENT GOES WITHOUT SAYING. SMALL
NATIONS AND LEADERS SUCH AS WILLIAMS MUST MAINTAIN THEIR
PRIDE IN DEALINGS WITH THE COLOSSUS OF THE NORTH.
PUBLIC INDICATIONS OF U.S. DISDAIN CAN UNDERMINE ALL OF
OUR EFFORTS TO CREATE IMPROVED RELATIONS THROUGH MEETINGS
SUCH AS THAT BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT.
I HOPE THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ME PROMPTLY
WITH GUIDANCE AND IF POSSIBLE A DENIAL WHICH I CAN CONVEY
BOTH TO DR. WILLIAMS AND TO THE PRESS HERE SPECIFICALLY
AND QUICKLY.
MILLER

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